

Less than half of GOP say 1/6 was very violent: AP-NORC poll

WASHINGTON (AP) — The fighting — so primitive and ferocious that one Capitol Police officer described it as "medieval" and another as a "trip to hell" — left more than 100 law enforcement personnel injured, some beaten with their own weapons. Video cameras captured the violence live, with rioters clubbing officers with flag polls and fire extinguishers, even squeezing one between doors as he begged for his life. Yet nearly a year after the Jan. 6 siege only about 4 in 10 Republicans recall the attack by supporters of then-President Donald Trump as very violent or extremely violent, according to a new poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. About 3 in 10 Republicans say the attack was not violent, and about another 3 in 10 say it was somewhat violent.

Continued on next page

HALF TRUTH



Rioters loyal to President Donald Trump rally at the U.S. Capitol in Washington on Jan. 6, 2021.

Associated Press

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Continued from Front

Their views were a distinct minority as overall about two-thirds of Americans described the day as very or extremely violent, including about 9 in 10 Democrats.

The findings reflect the country's political polarization, with a false portrayal of the siege taking hold despite extensive footage that shows the ransacking of the building in harrowing detail. Trump and some allies in Congress and conservative media have played it down, falsely characterizing the attack as a minor civil disturbance.

It's a view that is shared by many Republicans, though few go so far as to defend the rioters themselves.

"My understanding was that a lot of it was pretty peaceful," Paul Bender, a self-described conservative from Cleveland, told The Associated Press in a recent interview. "I've seen some video of the people just like marching in through a velvet rope."

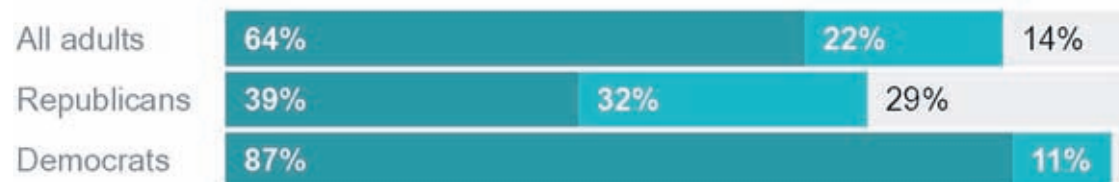
Bender, who said he didn't keep up with the news coverage, added, "There were certainly outlier people who were not peaceful and were breaking through the windows and stuff like

Fewer than half of Republicans say Jan. 6 attack was extremely or very violent

A new AP-NORC poll shows about two-thirds of Americans, including most Democrats, describe the attack of the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6 as extremely or very violent. Only about 4 in 10 Republicans say that.

Thinking about what happened at the U.S. Capitol on January 6, would you say it was ____?

Extremely/Very violent Somewhat violent
Not very/Not at all violent



Results based on interviews with 1,089 U.S. adults conducted Dec. 2-7. The margin of error is ± 4.1 percentage points for the full sample.

Source: AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research

AP

that, but I wasn't aware of overt violence."

Meanwhile, the percentage of Americans who blame Trump for the Jan. 6 riot has grown slightly over the past year, with 57% saying he bears significant responsibility for what took place. In an AP-NORC poll taken in the days after the attack, 50% said that.

The uptick is seen among Republicans as well, even as relatively few think Trump

bears significant responsibility. Twenty-two percent say that now, up from 11% last year. Sixty percent say he had little to no responsibility. "I don't believe that he actively was like promoting people to do anything other than a peaceful protest," Bender, 53, said. "However, once things got out of hand, I think that it would have been appropriate for him to have reacted sooner, whether that was a

statement or going on the radio or TV or whatever."

The insurrection was the closing act of Trump's desperate effort to overturn his election loss to Joe Biden. After Trump's baseless claims of voter fraud were soundly rejected in the courts, he shifted his focus to the Electoral College certification on Jan. 6, publicly pressuring then-Vice President Mike Pence to stop Congress from naming Biden the winner. Pence did not have that power under the law, as the vice president's function is largely ceremonial.

Trump promoted the Jan. 6 rally that preceded the attack, predicting it would be "wild," and in a speech that day urged his supporters to "fight like hell" as Congress convened to certify the election results. The attack halted that process for hours as rioters occupied the building.

Still, while few Republicans blame Trump, Republicans and Democrats alike overwhelmingly say that the individual rioters had a great deal or quite a bit of responsibility for their actions during the riot.

"I think there were strong supporters of President Trump that were there, but I think the people that caused the attacks might not have been true Trump supporters," said Mary Beth Bell of Jacksonville, Florida. "Because I know a lot of Trump supporters, and they

see what happened on Jan. 6 as disgusting as I do." About 7 in 10 Americans also say a House select committee should continue its investigation of the attack, while about 3 in 10 say it should not.

Robert Spry, a Democrat in Kingman, Arizona, said the congressional investigation is crucial for getting at the truth.

"We need a comprehensive report of that day. It has got to come to light what those people did to police and to that building," Spry said.

The 63-year-old, who used to vote Republican but now considers himself a conservative Democrat, said the protest-turned-attack appeared chaotic at first but the committee's findings are making it "more and more clear that it was planned in advance."

Forty-one percent of Republicans agree with Spry that Congress should continue to investigate, while 58% say it should not.

Bell said a federal investigation into what she saw as "a terrorist attack" is appropriate, but she objects to the way the nine-member panel has been conducting the investigation since July of last year.

"They're not listening to all the information. I feel like it's one-sided more or less than trying to investigate everything," she said of the committee, composed of seven Democrats and two Republicans. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi chose all the members of the committee after rejecting the choices of House GOP leadership.

Rep. Bennie Thompson, Democratic chairman of the committee, said it's important for Americans to know that Democrats first tried to create a bipartisan commission with an equal number of members from each party. But Republicans in the Senate blocked it from passage.

"Only because Republican leadership failed this country did Speaker Pelosi have to step up and do what's in the best interest of the country to make sure that we produce a committee that looks into the facts and circumstances of Jan. 6," Thompson said. □



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Navy blocked from acting against 35 COVID vaccine refusers

By **ROBERT BURNS**

AP National Security Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — A federal judge in Texas has granted a preliminary injunction stopping the Navy from acting against 35 sailors for refusing on religious grounds to comply with an order to get vaccinated against COVID-19.

The injunction is a new challenge to Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin's decision to make vaccinations mandatory for all members of the military. The vaccination requirement allows for exemptions on religious and other grounds, but none of the thousands of requests for religious waivers so far have been granted.

There was no indication that the order would affect service members beyond the 35 sailors who sued Austin and the Navy. The Pentagon had no immediate response to a request for comment.

Well over 90% of the military has been fully vaccinated against COVID-19, including at least 98.5% of active and reserve members of the Navy. Austin asserts that vaccines are a valid and necessary medical requirement to protect service members and their families and ensure the combat readiness of the force.

In his decision Monday, U.S. District Judge Reed O'Connor wrote that the Navy's process for considering a sailor's request for a religious exemption is flawed and amounts to "theater."

O'Connor, who was appointed by President George W. Bush, wrote that the group of 35 sailors who sued the government in November and sought a preliminary injunction against the Navy have a right on religious and First Amendment grounds to refuse the vaccination order.

"The Navy servicemembers in this case seek to vindicate the very freedoms they have sacrificed so much to protect," O'Connor wrote. "The COVID-19 pandemic provides the government no license to abrogate those freedoms. There is no



Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin speaks during a media briefing at the Pentagon, Nov. 17, 2021, in Washington.

Associated Press

COVID-19 exception to the First Amendment. There is no military exclusion from our Constitution."

The O'Connor injunction was first reported by The Washington Post.

Without commenting on the case in Texas, Pentagon spokesman John Kirby last month defended the validity of the military service's processes for considering religious exemptions.

"Each exemption asked for on religious grounds is evaluated by a chaplain, by a chain of command, by medical experts and is given quite a lot of thought, and they're all decided case by case individually," he said Dec. 21.

In his decision in favor of the injunction sought by the 35 Navy sailors, O'Connor wrote that they objected to being vaccinated on four grounds: "opposition to abortion and the use of aborted fetal cell lines in development of the vaccine; belief that modifying one's body is an affront to the Creator; divine instruction not to receive the vaccine, and opposition to injecting trace amounts of animal cells into one's body."

"Plaintiffs' beliefs about the vaccine are undisputedly sincere, and it is not the role of this court to determine their truthfulness or accu-

racy," the judge wrote.

The sailors who sued are members of the Naval Special Warfare Command, including SEALs. The suit was filed by First Liberty Institute, a nonprofit that focuses on defending religious liberty. In the early stages of the pandemic, the Navy struggled with one particularly critical COVID-19 outbreak. Hundreds of sailors aboard the USS Theodore Roosevelt aircraft carrier were infected, starting in late March while on a deployment to Vietnam and elsewhere in Asia.

The ship was taken out of operation at Guam, its commanding officer was relieved of duty and the crisis led to the resignation of acting Navy Secretary Thomas Modly. □

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California imposes water restrictions as drought drags on

By **KATHLEEN RONAYNE**
SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP)

— Californians won't be able to water their lawns for 48 hours after rainstorms or let their sprinklers run onto the sidewalk under mandatory water restrictions state regulators adopted Tuesday as a drought continues despite heavy December rain and snow.

The rules could take effect as soon as the end of the month and could result in a fine of up to \$500 per day, though regulators stressed they want to encourage voluntary conservation and that it will be up to local authorities to decide on enforcement.

The State Water Resources Control Board's action comes as Californians continue to fall short on Gov. Gavin Newsom's call for a voluntary 15% reduction in water use compared to last year. Between July and November, the state's water usage went down just 6%. The new restrictions follow an extremely wet December that state officials warned may not continue during the winter months that normally are the state's wettest. Weather patterns have become more un-



Water flows down a sidewalk from water sprinklers running at a home Thursday, April 2, 2015, in Rancho Cordova, Calif.

Associated Press

predictable due to climate change and state climatologist Michael Anderson said forecasts show January, February and March could be drier than average.

Earlier forecasts didn't predict such a wet December, which saw record amounts of rain and snow in many areas. In mid-December, about 80% of the state

was in extreme or exceptional drought conditions. By the end of the month only about a third was experiencing those conditions, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor that tabulates conditions.

Despite the rain, significant parts of the state's water system are still under stress from the extremely dry conditions earlier in 2021 that

dropped many of California's largest reservoirs to record and near-record lows. "Conserving water and reducing water waste are critical and necessary habits for everyone to adopt as we adjust to these uncertainties and we build resilience to climate change, so adopting emergency regulations now just makes sense," said Eric Oppen-

heimer, chief deputy director for the state water board. "We need to be prepared for continued drought."

Northern California was wetter than Southern California in November and conserved significantly more water.

Regions north of the San Joaquin River, including Sacramento and San Francisco, used between 17% and 26% less water than November 2020, while Los Angeles, Orange and San Diego counties that account for 55% of the state's population used nearly 1% more, according to state data.

Among the water uses that won't be allowed under the new rules: outdoor watering that results in excessive runoff into the street and sidewalks; using water for landscaping and irrigation during the 48 hours after storms that bring at least .25 inches (.63 centimeters) of rain; washing cars with hoses lacking shut-off nozzles; using potable water to wash driveways, sidewalks, buildings and patios and for street cleaning or to fill decorative fountains or lakes. □

Florida passenger train line kills 5th person in a month



Vehicles wait for a Brightline passenger train to pass on Wednesday, Nov. 27, 2019, in Oakland Park, Fla.

Associated Press

By **TERRY SPENCER**
Associated Press

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP) — A Brightline high-speed train fatally struck a pedestrian who walked into its path Tuesday, the fifth death involving the railroad since it recently re-

sumed operations after being shutdown because of the pandemic.

Boynton Beach police said the pedestrian was struck about 7:50 a.m. Spokeswoman Stephanie Slater said no further details were immediately available.

The recent deaths have all occurred in the last month, continuing a trend that shows Brightline to have the worst fatality rate among the country's approximately 800 railroads since it began test runs in mid-2017, according to an Associated Press analysis of Federal Railroad Administration data.

None of the 52 earlier deaths involving Brightline have been blamed on its equipment or crews. Investigations showed most victims were either suicidal, intoxicated, mentally ill or had gone around barriers at an intersection in an attempt to beat the trains, which travel up to 79 mph (128 kph) through densely populated areas between Miami and West Palm Beach.

Brightline officials did not

immediately return a call and email Tuesday seeking comment.

After a recent accident, the privately owned railroad issued a statement saying, "safety is a topic that we will not stop talking about and we are asking the community, law enforcement, elected officials and members of the media to use their platforms and help amplify a consistent safety message: stay off the tracks and obey all warning signs."

Brightline has installed infrared detectors that will warn engineers if anyone is lurking near the tracks so they can slow down or stop. The company has added more fencing and landscaping to make track access more difficult and is also installing red-light cameras at crossings that will allow police

to ticket drivers who go around guardrails. It is testing drones to monitor the tracks.

The first of the latest spate happened Dec. 7, when a pedestrian was struck in North Miami Beach. Four days later, a pedestrian was struck in Hollywood. On Dec. 30, a 68-year-old driver and his 58-year-old sister died when he drove around warning gates into the path of a Brightline train.

Brightline shut down its service from March 2020 until November, but one of its trains fatally struck a pedestrian in July during an engineer training exercise. An ongoing AP analysis of federal data that began in 2019 shows Brightline trains strike someone about every 33,000 miles (53,100 kilometers) traveled. □

Steps urged as 3 women slain in a day by partners in France

PARIS (AP) — Three women in France were found dead on New Year's Day, allegedly killed by their partners, despite efforts by President Emmanuel Macron's government to rein in deadly domestic violence.

In all three cases, the men told police they themselves were at fault, according to local media reports.

Feminist groups are crying for more action and 1 billion euros in funding to train all French police and ensure better protection for those targeted by abusive partners.

In response to public anger, government ministers held an online meeting on Tuesday with local officials in the town where one of the killings occurred. "We're all mobilized," tweeted the junior minister for equal rights, Elisabeth Moreno.

"Three women killed in 24 hours and their only reaction is to organize a little meeting days later?" asked Marylie Breuil of activist group Nous Toutes. "No, their work isn't done."

The three deaths were especially shocking after high-profile efforts by the French government to prevent such killings, and by French activists and media to shine a light on them.



In the early hours of Monday Nov. 4, 2019, from left to right, Pauline, Clivia, France and Lea paste a slogan on a fountain reading "Femicides : guilty state, accomplice justice" in central Paris.

Associated Press

A 45-year-old woman in the French Riviera city of Nice was found strangled on New Year's Day in the trunk of her son's car, after her husband turned himself into police, according to regional broadcaster France-3.

The same day in northeast France, a 56-year-old woman was found stabbed to

death in the town of Labry, and her partner acknowledged killing her in an argument, local news site Lorraine Actu quoted the regional prosecutor as saying.

And in western France, a 27-year-old woman was found lying with fatal knife wounds outside her home. Her partner was arrest-

ed and a murder probe opened, according to France-3.

Moreno called all three "femicides," or the killing of a woman or girl because of her gender.

Activists who calculate such killings say 113 women in France lost their lives at the hands of current or former partners last year,

compared to 102 in 2020 and 152 in 2019, when Macron launched a nationwide campaign against domestic violence.

Breuil says nearly two-thirds of victims had reported past abuse to police, and noted that such killings are "just the top tip of the iceberg" of domestic abuse. "There are so many signals you can notice" before such abuse turns deadly, she said.

In one shocking case last year, a woman was burned to death by her partner after reporting abuse to a police officer who himself had a previous conviction for domestic violence, and the complaint was mishandled. Six police officials are facing a disciplinary council Tuesday as part of an internal investigation into the case.

The government has increased efforts to train police to respond more effectively and sensitively to reports of abuse. But Breuil says the training doesn't reach enough police and is too cursory to make a difference. She also called on the government to better apply its own rules on imposing electronic bracelets or restraining orders on abusers. □

Record number of migrant boats crossed Channel in 2021

LONDON (AP) — At least 28,300 people packed into small boats crossed the Channel from France to England's south coast in 2021, an annual record that was three times the number of crossings a year earlier.

The leap in numbers, reported Tuesday by the Press Association news agency based on data from Britain's Home Office, reflects the soaring number of migrants seeking to cross the world's busiest shipping lane often in flimsy boats provided by people smugglers.

The arrivals continued Tuesday, with a group of people, mostly men but also a young child in a pink, one-piece suit, rescued by a

British lifeboat and brought to Dover on England's south coast.

The risks were tragically underscored on Nov. 24, when at least 27 migrants drowned as their boat sank after leaving France. The crossings have become a source of tension between France and Britain.

As winter approached last year, November was the busiest month for crossings of the Channel, which is about 20 miles (32 kilometers) wide at its narrowest point, with 6,869 people reaching the U.K. On Nov. 11 alone, 1,185 people made the risky crossing in 33 boats.

The figures also show that the boats are getting larger, with an average of 28

people on board each vessel that arrived in the UK, up from just over 13 a year earlier. Activists are calling for the British government to offer more opportunities to asylum-seekers in a bid to decrease the number of Channel crossings.

Tim Naor Hilton, chief executive at Refugee Action, said that the U.K. government's policy will lead to more deaths in the Dover Strait.

"People will continue to cross the Channel in flimsy boats, and smugglers will continue to profit, unless ministers open up more routes for refugees to claim asylum here," Naor Hilton said.

Clare Moseley, founder of charity Care4Calais which



A group of people thought to be migrants are brought in to Dover, Kent, Britain, by the RNLI following a small boat incident in the Channel, Tuesday Jan. 4, 2022.

Associated Press

supports refugees living in northern France, agreed. "If the government were serious about stopping people smugglers, it would cre-

ate a safe way for people to claim asylum and put people smugglers out of business once and for all," she said. □

China denies U.S. report it's rapidly growing its nuclear arms

By **KEN MORITSUGU**

BEIJING (AP) — A senior Chinese arms control official denied Tuesday that his government is rapidly expanding its nuclear arsenal, though he said it is taking steps to modernize its nuclear forces.

Fu Cong, director general of the Foreign Ministry's arms control department, said China is working to ensure its nuclear deterrent meets the minimum level necessary for national defense.

"On the assertions made by U.S. officials that China is expanding dramatically its nuclear capabilities, first, let me say that this is untrue," he said at a briefing in Beijing.

The briefing was held a day after China, the U.S., Russia, Great Britain and France issued a joint statement on preventing nuclear war or an arms race. The statement was supposed to be timed to the start of a global conference on disarmament at the U.N., but the meeting has been postponed because of a surge in COVID-19 cases.

The U.S. Defense Depart-



Fu Cong, the director general of the Foreign Ministry's arms control department, attends a press conference on nuclear arms control in Beijing, China, Tuesday, Jan. 4, 2022.

Associated Press

ment said in a report in November that China is expanding its nuclear force faster than previously predicted and could have more than 1,000 warheads by 2030. The U.S. has 3,750 nuclear weapons.

The U.S. has also raised concern about analyst reports based on satellite imagery that China is building missile silos in its northwestern des-

ert and its test of a hypersonic missile last summer.

Fu would not confirm the missile silos but said the size of China's nuclear force should not be estimated based on the satellite photos.

He said China does need to take steps to make sure its nuclear force is sufficient in light of a changing security environment in Asia. He

cited U.S. talk of deploying intermediate-range non-nuclear missiles in the region. India also has nuclear weapons, as does its neighbor Pakistan.

Fu stuck by the Chinese position that it would not join nuclear arms reduction talks between the U.S. and Russia, as the American side is pushing for. He called on both to reduce

their arsenals, by far the largest in the world.

"We will be happy to join if they have reduced to our level," he said, adding that "the two superpowers need to ... drastically reduce their nuclear capabilities to a level comparable to the level of China, and for that matter to the level of France and the U.K., so that other nuclear states can join in this process."

U.S. President Joe Biden's administration is carrying out a review of America's nuclear posture, but major change seems unlikely given the reports of China's growing nuclear force and tensions with China over Taiwan and with Russia over Ukraine.

Fu also called on the U.S. to lift sanctions on Iran, and for Iran to return to its nuclear commitments on that basis. Iran is in talks with the U.S., China, Russia, the U.K., France and Germany on restoring a 2015 agreement that granted Iran sanctions relief in exchange for curbs on its nuclear program. Former President Donald Trump pulled the U.S. out of the deal in 2018. □



A section of the Evergrande mega-project complexes is seen on Haihua or Ocean Flower island in Danzhou in south China's Hainan province on Nov. 19, 2019.

Associated Press

By **JOE McDONALD**

BEIJING (AP) — A troubled Chinese real estate developer that is struggling with \$310 billion in debt announced Tuesday it has been ordered to demolish a 39-building resort complex in a new blow to its finances.

Evergrande Group gave no explanation, but news reports said the government of Danzhou, a city on the

southern island province of Hainan, found it was improperly built and violated urban planning law.

Evergrande's struggle to comply with tighter official restrictions on use of borrowed money by China's real estate industry have prompted fears of a possible default and financial crisis. Chinese regulators have tried to reassure investors that any potential

Troubled Chinese developer told to demolish resort

impact on financial markets can be contained.

Economists say Beijing can keep Chinese lending markets functioning normally in the event of an Evergrande default, which looks increasingly likely. However, they say Chinese leaders want to avoid sending the wrong signal by arranging a bailout at a time when they are trying to force companies to reduce surging debt levels.

Evergrande asked Monday for trading of its shares in Hong Kong to be suspended. Trading resumed following Tuesday's announcement, gaining 7.6%. The company gave no indication of the possible loss from the demolition of the buildings on Ocean Flower Island. It said other buildings on the island weren't

affected by the order.

Evergrande, the global real estate industry's most heavily-indebted developer, warned last month it might run out of cash to keep up with debt payments and other obligations. The company says it has 2.3 trillion yuan (\$350 billion) in assets and 2 trillion yuan (\$310 billion in debt), but it has struggled to sell assets fast enough to keep up payments to bondholders. Construction of some projects was temporarily suspended after contractors complained they weren't being paid.

Tuesday's announcement said buyers in 20210 signed contracts to purchase property worth a total of 442 billion yuan (\$70 billion). Beijing tightened restrictions on developers last

year in a campaign to rein in surging corporate debt that is seen as a threat to economic stability. The ruling Communist Party has made reducing financial risk a priority since 2018.

The Danzhou government's order said Evergrande's project violated a national urban planning law. It said the government will organize demolition if the company fails to act.

The Hainan government ordered an investigation last year of Ocean Flower Island, a complex of hotels, an amusement park and other facilities, according to news reports.

They said some building permissions were revoked and fines of 215 million yuan (\$34 million) were imposed for planning and construction violations. □



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Suspects held after fake online sale of Indian Muslim women

By SHEIKH SAALIQ
Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — Police in India have detained a man and a woman alleged to be involved in the offering for sale of prominent Muslim women on a fake online auction website, according to government officials, in a case that has sparked outrage across the country. The cyber unit of the Mumbai Police detained the two suspects following a complaint from one of the targeted women. It wasn't clear whether the two created the website.

Police brought charges against the man, a 21-year-old engineering student, and said they were investigating the woman further. Photographs of more than 100 prominent Indian Muslim women, including journalists, activists, film stars and artists, were displayed last weekend without their permission on a website and put up for fake auction. The women listed on the website also included the 65-year-old mother of a disappeared Indian student and Pakistani Nobel laureate Malala Yousafzai. The website, which was taken down within 24 hours, was called "Bulli Bai," a derogatory slang term for Indian Muslims. Though there was no real sale involved, the Muslim women listed on the website said the auction was intended to humiliate them, many of whom have been vocal about rising Hindu nationalism in India and some of the policies of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The website was hosted on GitHub, a San Francisco-based coding platform. A company spokesperson said GitHub had taken down the user account that had hosted the website on its platform, and that



Unidentified Muslim women walk past a board displaying the name of the Hindu nationalist group Sri Ram Sena Hindustan in a residential neighborhood in Belagavi, India, Oct. 7, 2021.

Associated Press

it would cooperate with investigating authorities.

The fake auction unleashed outrage on Twitter after complaints from the victims, with several women posting screenshots after finding their photos listed on the website. Women rights groups and politicians from opposition parties urged the governing Bharatiya Janata Party to take action against online harassment of Muslim women, prompting Indian technology minister Ashwini Vaishnaw to promise strict measures. Police in at least three states said they have opened investigations into the incident and filed criminal complaints against developers of the website, based on the complaints of the targeted women.

This is not the first time Muslim women were listed on a fake auction website. Last June, a similar website called "Sulli Deals," also a derogatory term for Muslim women, was created for the same purpose. That

website remained online for weeks and was only taken down by authorities after complaints from victims. Police opened an investigation into that case, but no one was arrested.

Indian women, particularly Muslim women, have often found themselves the target of hate and abuse on social media platforms, including Twitter. Outspoken Muslim women, including journalists and activists and those critical of Modi and his Hindu nationalist party, have received threats of rape and violence.

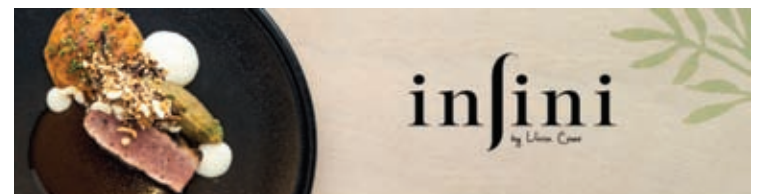
Many of the victims say the fake auction website is the latest attempt to intimidate them.

Khadija Khan, a lawyer and journalist with Bar & Bench website, said she received a Twitter notification on New Year's Eve that informed her she was tagged in a tweet that displayed her picture as part of the fake auction. The account has since been suspended. Khan's initial reaction was

to report the tweet and block the user, dismissing it as spam. But she soon received messages from her friends and colleagues who confirmed to her that she was also on the list.

"My initial reaction was indifference and dismissal because we are used to daily trolling but by the next day, it had turned into shock and horror. Realizing what it actually was gave me nightmares," Khan said. Khan found support from her family and colleagues, but the incident left her shaken.

"It's a message that 'Look! We can brazenly humiliate and sell Muslim women online and still go scot free while they are still vying for some modicum of justice,'" Khan said. □



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you are renting a condominium with the luxury services of a hotel. On your way to the suite the resort shows you already the attention to details: the elevator space is upgraded with corners of huge bamboo poles and trendy light bulbs incorporated in a wall of wooded decoration. The hallways are high and spacious taking you to the hip suite where the design is white with light wood to provide a luxury, contemporary ambiance. The suite's kitchen is fully equipped with an oven, dishwasher and kitchenware, a big family table ready to invite you to family breakfast or a friends gathering. You feel great, the white interior even accentuates the bright-blue ocean in front of you: inhale this Zen moment from your spacious balcony.

Have a Sunset bite

A delightful breakfast, a scrumptious lunch or a delicious dinner are all possible at Sunset Bistro on the third floor. Here you will find a modern setting by the hotel's infinity pool with amazing ocean views. The chef and his team are clearly dedicated to making you come back presenting to you tasty tapas items or full entrée offerings. One thing has to be said: the hotel's staff makes a difference. Real smiles, real attention and real enthusiasm is what you encounter. Here we are experiencing something new and a new place has new



vibes, for you to discover. Go and find out why Sunset Bistro is the next hotspot for a bite, a drink or more.

Water wellness

Imagine to wake up in your spacious, stylish suite and after some yawning and stretching you enjoy a cup of Joe on your balcony where your eye catches the huge pool below. This is very inviting and your body needs this as we all know that water makes us feel calm. The only worries you will have is to choose between the infinity pool right in front of Sunset Bistro or the big adult and children's pools centered between the suites and main hotel building. Cindy or one of her colleagues from the Acqua Breeze

Pool Bar welcome you with a big smile and Caribbean flair.

That Blu thing

To say it all in a nutshell: this resort has a special something to it, you feel the difference in the attention, the design, the details and the space. To find out for yourself, you need to dive into the experience and most probably you will say like we do: it's a Blu thing.

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COVID-19 Status on Aruba

ORANJESTAD – Rules and protocols are being reviewed and evaluated on a daily basis and adapted as per current situation by a crisis team, in order to protect each and every one visiting and residing our island.

Covid Status:

There are currently 3,327 active cases. 2,345 are residents and 660 non-residents. 181 deceased. There are 14 persons hospitalized in Aruba of which 3 are in the ICU. Due to lack of staff at the hospital they have to send patients over to Colombia for treatment. There are currently 3 persons at the ICU in Colombia.

Vaccination Status:

A total of 84,191 of the total population has been vaccinated of which 78,627 persons received both shots of the vaccine and 5,564 received only the first shot. Children as young as 12 years are being vaccinated. For the senior population of 60 years and older a total of 21,794 received both shots and 995 received only the first shot.

Aruba is administering booster shots to persons 40 and older. As seen around the world, the booster shot provides that extra layer of protection against the Delta variant as well as the Omicron variant, reducing the possible effects when infected with either variant. Persons 40 years and older can now walk-in at the Centro Deportivo Betico Croes in Santa Cruz, from Monday to Friday from 8:00 am - 3:00 pm for their booster vaccine. You do not need an appointment for the Booster Shot.

The measures are as follows as of December 30, 2021

- Curfew: NO Curfew
- Closing Time: 12:00 am for all business for the exception of Casino's which can stay open till 1:00 am
- Restaurants: Max. 6 people per table.
- Social Activities and Sports: Max. people: 60 indoors, 75 outdoors.
- Funerals: Max. people: 75 (if the space is adequately large enough)
- Area Ban 7:00 pm - 5:00 am
- Nightlife: Dancing is not permitted
- Entertainment: Max 5 musicians on stage.
- Gathering Ban: Max. 6 people.
- Shopping: 1 person per family

** Businesses are allowed to lit their pagara until 12:00pm on December 31, 2021.



** Nightlife will be able to stay open until 1:00am on New Year's day instead of 12:00 am.

The following measures remain applicable:

- Masks: Use of masks is mandatory inside at all establishments.
- Alcohol: Ban of alcohol on public roads: 24 hours.
- Social Distancing: Continue maintaining social distance.

New isolation and quarantine guidelines

The Crisis Team, after thorough consideration of the different advice and analysis, has changed the isolation and quarantine guidelines. Once a person gets a positive SARS-CoV-2 test result, the person should isolate for five days and avoid contact with others in the household. The five days of isolation start on the date the person received the positive test result.

If after five days in isolation you still have symptoms, you must continue to isolate until you no longer have symptoms. After 24 hours without any symptoms, the person should complete the form sent by email. Those living in the same house as the person who tested positive should

quarantine for 5 days, starting on the day they had immediate contact with the person who tested positive and should wear masks at all times. The person who tested positive must inform others living in the same home about the positive test result. The isolation and quarantine protocols are included in the email sent to anyone who tests positive. Please be aware that the DVG will no longer contact those who tested positive or anyone living in the same household. The DVG urges those who tested positive to complete the form that sent by email and to provide information about everyone living in the same home that needs to quarantine.

New route to the Hospital Test Center

The drastic increase in Covid19 cases is causing more people to get tested. This is causing very long lines and congesting traffic around the hospital and even blocking important entrances for patients, visitors, and even the emergency entrance. This is causing a logistic headache for the hospital. In cooperation with the department of Infrastructure, DOW, and the Police Department, since December 30, 2021, an alternative route to the Test Center of the LabHOH is available. The alternative access route to the Test Center is via the roundabout near the Citgo Sasaki / Eagle Bowling, towards Gloria Cinemas, and straight to the Hospital. If you need to get tested at the Test Center of the LabHOH, please keep this new route in mind and follow the signs accordingly. There will also be hospital security to assist. □

ULTIMO INFORMACION			
Casonan di Corona Virus, Vacunacion y Hospitalisacion na Aruba 4 di Januari 2022			
4/1/2022	TOTAL	RESIDENTE	NO-RESIDENTE
Casonan Nobo	1028	929	99
Activo	3327	2667	660
Recuperado	19540	17220	2320
Positivo	23048	20064	2984
Muerto	181	177	4
Vacuado	84815	-	-
Hospitalisado	21	-	-
ICU	5	-	-



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Furthermore, the gelatissimo cups, which are available in small or family size, consisting of 3 flavors: strac-



ciatella, hazelnut crunch, and pistacchio are available at the Ling & Sons, Superfood and Do It Center Supermarkets.

The refreshing fruit or milk popsicles, which are available in 10 flavors, are the perfect way to cool off after a day in the sun, or if you're looking for some-

thing more adult-themed, then the gelatissimo bon bons are a must-have. The gelatissimo bon bons are chocolate covered gelato beautifully packaged, consisting of 10 bon bons in 5 delicious flavors; amaretto, hazelnut crunch, mandarin, coconut, and coffee.

For those that love a good dessert sandwich, then the gelatissimo sandwiches are the right choice. The sandwiches consist of gelato in the middle of 2 exquisite biscuits, available in 4 fla-



vors; stracciatella, italian cheesecake, hazelnut, and black hawaii. The Italian gelato, bon bons, popsicles, and sand-

wiches, are also sold at the Gelatissimo Bus located at Gianni Plaza, the Palm Pier or any location that sells gelatissimo. □



Your Point of View



ORANJESTAD — **Aruba Today** encourages you to share your opinion with our readers through our newest column 'Your Point of view'.

Was there a certain situation that you think might have been handled differently? Or perhaps a really nice experience you went through? Maybe you want to just let our readers know how your overall experience was on the island while vacationing here despite the crisis. Let's exchange ideas and experiences related to Aruba. Got

some useful tips to share with our visitors please sent it.

Send us 'Your Point of View' with your name and where you are from to news@arubatoday.com.

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Millennial Money: Save for what makes you feel good in 2022



By **LAURA MCMULLEN** of NerdWallet

You probably know to plan and save for the big and boring expenses, aka financial needs. But what about the fun stuff? Expenses that don't put a roof over your head, but do provide joy, rejuvenation and other hard-to-quantify benefits are worth saving for, too. In fact, they deserve their own account, says Delia Fernandez, a Los Alamitos, California-based certified financial planner.

"Figure out what keeps you going, what makes all of this worthwhile to you, and put money aside to make that happen," she says.

WHAT KINDS OF EXPENSES ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?

When it comes to feel-good expenses, each person has their own preferences, says Aja Evans, a New York-based financial therapist and licensed mental health counselor. For example, some people would find an intense cycling class to be energizing and confidence-boosting.

Others would rather do pretty much anything else. Consider which goods, services and activities typically bring you joy. Yes, your budget will determine what, exactly, you can afford. But, for now, reflect. Fernandez asks: "What's going to get you through these times? And what makes your life valuable? What refreshes you; what inspires you?"

A few ideas: services like massages; goods like fresh flowers; activities like vacations and date nights.

WHY SHOULD I SET UP A FEEL-GOOD ACCOUNT?

Earmarking money for these kinds of expenditures may help you be more intentional with spending. For example, say you put \$25 from each paycheck in a vacation fund. With that money safely stashed, you can't mindlessly spend it on impulse purchases. You're also protecting that money from financial demands. Otherwise, if all your available money were in one bucket, Evans says

your self-care spending would likely be the first to cut when money is tight.

By devoting money to a specific kind of expense — be it a mortgage or manicure — you're creating a budget. And budgets help prevent you from overspending.

Say you have up to \$50 to spend each month on brunch with friends, and you've already spent \$35. This weekend, maybe you still enjoy brunch but skip the mimosa that would put you over the \$15 you have left.

Ideally, this plan also hedges any potential guilt about spending money on yourself. As Fernandez says: "You put it aside for that purpose."

HOW DO I SWING THIS IN MY BUDGET?

Hopefully you've been convinced to treat yourself in the new year. Now plan for those treats.

One way to determine how much you can afford to spend is to apply the 50/30/20 rule to your

monthly take-home income.

The goal of this budget method is to split your money as such: 50% toward needs, 30% toward wants and 20% toward savings and debt repayment. If you follow that framework, your new feel-good fund would come from that "wants" category.

Not trying to officially budget at this point? Here's another approach: Start with your monthly after-tax income, then subtract all the necessary expenses (needs), which include housing, food, transportation, basic utilities, insurance, child care and other expenses that enable you to work, as well as minimum loan payments.

Next, subtract contributions toward savings goals (like an emergency fund), as well as payments toward retirement accounts and debts.

What's left is your discretionary money. Decide how much of that to regularly contribute to your

new fund. "That could be \$10. That could be \$50. That could be \$100," Evans says. "The main point is that you're actually setting aside the money."

Ideally, these contributions go directly from your paychecks to a new fund, Fernandez says. (Work with your employer to set up a new direct deposit.) If that method is unavailable, set up recurring automatic transfers from your everyday checking to the new account.

WHERE DO I KEEP THIS MONEY?

Fernandez recommends keeping this fund in an online savings account, in which you'll likely earn interest.

Note that you're typically limited to six withdrawals or transfers per month from savings accounts before incurring fees. That rule has been temporarily relaxed during the pandemic, but to avoid fees in the future, consider a savings account only for infrequent withdrawals. Use it for your monthly spa visit, for example. Or watch your savings grow as you collect cash for a trip or large purchase. If you plan to use this fund more than six times per month — say, for frequent morning smoothies — opt for a checking account. Open it at a financial institution you don't already use, so the new account isn't too easy to tap for everyday expenses. Aim for a free account, with no monthly fee or minimum balance. A few of those checking accounts even earn a little interest.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Enjoy the stuff for which you saved. Then regularly revisit your plan, Fernandez says. You may want to change how much you contribute — perhaps more after a raise or less after an emergency expense.

What you save for could change, too. Maybe you wind up preferring drawing lessons over cycling classes. "We all have to have a plan," Fernandez says, "but we all have to update it and change it when the facts change." □

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Trunk tool
- 5 Sudden storm
- 11 Sore spot
- 12 Down Under denizen
- 13 Amused look
- 14 Sounded the alarm?
- 15 Aug. follower
- 16 Weary sigh
- 17 Makes healthy
- 19 Lawn material
- 22 Mocking comments
- 24 Boorish fellow
- 26 Manor head
- 27 Tag info
- 28 Make sense
- 30 Uses a sponge
- 31 Agreeable answer
- 32 Bring together
- 34 Ship lockup
- 35 Director DuVernay
- 38 Regular array
- 41 Small songbird
- 42 Relaxed
- 43 Norse god
- 44 Garden makeup
- 45 Ibsen's home

DOWN

- 1 Benders
- 2 Lot unit
- 3 They may be tapped instead of swiped
- 4 Boxer Norton
- 5 Dark fur
- 6 Nauseated
- 7 Calls on
- 8 Nile serpent
- 9 Tell tales
- 10 Was a pioneer
- 16 Noah's boat
- 18 Pakistan language
- 19 Where boats get built
- 20 Seep
- 21 Female rabbits
- 22 Wow 'em at the comedy club
- 23 Network junction
- 25 "Like that'll happen!"
- 29 Strict grammarian
- 30 Fake locks
- 33 Vetoes
- 34 Muffin makeup
- 36 Bride's wear
- 37 Part of A.D.
- 38 Subway aid
- 39 Georgia airport code
- 40 Earl Grey, e.g.
- 41 Court



Yesterday's answer



1-5

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

1-5

CRYPTOQUOTE

U I L H D I U T Q Y W E Z W Q J A Y W E .

Y J Y C V I X X J H Z C P V A I J A I D

H W I O H T X S S H V Y J A H T J Y J .

— R I A W X T U U H O P

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: THE LEAST MOVEMENT IS OF IMPORTANCE TO ALL NATURE. THE ENTIRE OCEAN IS AFFECTED BY A PEBBLE. — BLAISE PASCAL

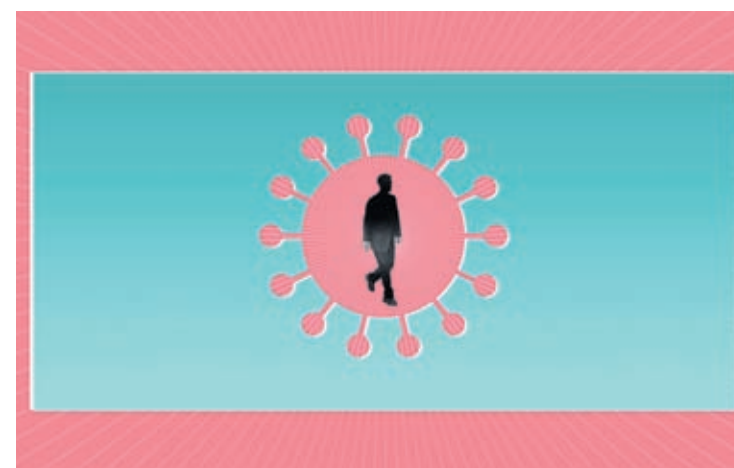
Why are so many vaccinated people getting COVID-19 lately?

By LAURA UNGAR
AP Science Writer

Why are so many vaccinated people getting COVID-19 lately?

A couple of factors are at play, starting with the emergence of the highly contagious omicron variant. Omicron is more likely to infect people, even if it doesn't make them very sick, and its surge coincided with the holiday travel season in many places. People might mistakenly think the COVID-19 vaccines will completely block infection, but the shots are mainly designed to prevent severe illness, says Louis Mansky, a virus researcher at the University of Minnesota. And the vaccines are still doing their job on that front, particularly for people who've gotten boosters.

Two doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccines or one dose of the



Why are so many vaccinated people getting COVID-19 lately? (Associated Press Illustration/Peter Hamlin)

Johnson & Johnson vaccine still offer strong protection against serious illness from omicron. While those initial doses aren't very good at blocking omicron infection, boosters particularly with the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines rev up levels of the antibodies to help fend off infection. Omicron appears to replicate much more efficiently than previous variants. And if infected people have high virus loads, there's a greater likelihood they'll pass it on to others, especially the unvaccinated.

Vaccinated people who get the virus are more likely to have mild symptoms, if any, since the shots trigger multiple defenses in your immune system, making it much more difficult for omicron to slip past them all. Advice for staying safe hasn't changed. Doctors say to wear masks indoors, avoid crowds and get vaccinated and boosted. Even though the shots won't always keep you from catching the virus, they'll make it much more likely you stay alive and out of the hospital.

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Natasha Rothwell is ready to be the lead

By **AMANDA LEE MYERS**

Los Angeles (AP) — In one of the last scenes of "Insecure," Issa, Molly, Kelli and Tiffany are having a girls night-in when one of them gets a little emotional and they all come in for a hug. Kelli, played by Natasha Rothwell, bursts into tears and shouts, "The f— I'm crying for?!"

Rothwell was in character, but she knew it was one of their last hugs before the hit



Natasha Rothwell, a cast member in "The White Lotus," poses at the premiere of the HBO limited series, Wednesday, July 7, 2021, at the Bel Air Bay Club in Los Angeles.

Associated Press

show that changed her life wrapped for good.

"That scene is only good because she was vulnerable enough to go there and then that let all the women to engage in such a way," said Amy Aniobi, who directed the episode, and was the head writer and executive producer of "Insecure." "That moment is so real and it's because of Natasha. She's a power-

house."

As the "Insecure" chapter of Rothwell's life comes to a close, she's writing many more. In "The White Lotus," Rothwell stood out among an ensemble cast who all put in stellar performances. Rothwell wrote a romantic comedy with herself in mind to play the lead, and she sealed a major deal with ABC Signature to develop new projects for

television. She also began filming the secretive, big budget "Wonka" in London alongside Timothée Chalamet, Olivia Colman and Sally Hawkins.

All of that in one year.

"It's crazy," Rothwell recently told The Associated Press on a video chat from London. "I could not have predicted this moment or what 'Insecure' has done to bring me to this moment. I used

to sort of like, roll my eyes every time Taylor Swift was all, 'Aw shucks, really, me?' And now I get it because I feel that way constantly." She's particularly excited about a show she's writing and starring in as part of the deal with ABC/Disney. "It's one of the things that's been in my heart for some time," she said.

The show will be the culmination of everything Rothwell learned on "Insecure" as a writer, actor, producer and for the first time this past year, director.

Part of that means creating an inclusive writers room, opportunities for female directors, and representing all people, including those with disabilities and the LGBTQ community. Rothwell also wants the show to bring attention to the issues she cares most about, like bodily autonomy and voting.

Ever since Rothwell got a platform, she's been using it to talk about injustice and express her disgust with certain politicians. That includes tweeting "You are trash" to Donald Trump daily during his presidency. (Her new target is George Gov. Brian Kemp, whom she now tweets, "You are trash," daily.) □

David Bowie's extensive music catalog is sold to Warner



David Bowie accepts the lifetime achievement award at the 11th Annual Webby Awards in New York on June 5, 2007.

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The extensive music catalog of David Bowie, stretching from the late 1960s to just before his death in 2016,

has been sold to Warner Chappell Music.

More than 400 songs, among them "Space Oddity," "Ziggy Stardust," "Fame,"

"Rebel Rebel" and "Let's Dance" on 26 Bowie studio albums released during his lifetime, a posthumous studio album release, Toy, two studio albums from Tin Machine, as well as tracks released as singles from soundtracks and other projects, are included.

Financial details of the sale were not released. Warner Chappell is the music publishing wing of Warner Music Group Corp. Bruce Springsteen sold his catalog to Sony Music last month for a reported \$500 million. Among others that have sold their catalogs in recent years, either in part or in their entirety, are Bob Dylan, Neil Young and Stevie Nicks.

David Bowie, born David

Jones in London in 1947, died in January 2016 after battling cancer for 18 months. As a performer, Bowie had unpredictable range of styles, melding European jadedness with American rhythms and his ever-changing personas and wardrobes. The gaunt and erudite Bowie brought an open theatricality and androgyny to popular music that changed the very meaning of being a rock star. He was inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in 1996.

Last year Warner Music Group reached a deal with the Bowie estate that gave Warner Music licensed worldwide rights to Bowie's recorded music catalog from 1968. □



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After 8 years as NBA assistant, Hammon to lead team in WNBA

By **DOUG FEINBERG**
AP Basketball Writer

Becky Hammon was ready to lead her own team. So she went back to where her professional career began — the WNBA.

Hammon, an assistant with the San Antonio Spurs, will take over as the Las Vegas Aces' head coach after the NBA season concludes. "Being the head coach of the Las Vegas Aces is a step forward and a step in the right direction for myself and for women's basketball," Hammon said. "I cannot emphasize enough the importance of this opportunity that I have. There's something to being a head coach."

Hammon has spent eight seasons as a Spurs assistant and has interviewed for several NBA head coaching jobs. But for now, her dream of becoming the first woman to lead an NBA team is on hold.

"I sat in head coaching interviews (in the NBA) and people said two things: 'You've only been in San Antonio and you've never been a head coach,'" she said. "NBA jobs are hard to get. In some ways, I feel like the NBA maybe is close. In other ways, I feel like they're a long ways off from hiring (a woman head coach). I don't know when it could happen."

There are still a half dozen women assistant coaches



San Antonio Spurs assistant coach Becky Hammon during the first half of an NBA basketball game against the Dallas Mavericks, Friday, Nov. 12, 2021, in San Antonio.

Associated Press

in the NBA. Hammon's resume earned her plenty of respect: She will be the WNBA's highest-paid coach. Hammon will replace Bill Laimbeer, who has been with the team since it moved to Las Vegas in 2017 and led the Aces on deep playoff runs the past three seasons, including a WNBA

Finals appearance in 2020. Last season, the 64-year-old coach took a step back, letting assistant Tanisha Wright run more practices and in-game huddles. Wright left in the offseason to be the head coach of the Atlanta Dream. "This is the organization that made it very, very obvious

they wanted me really, really bad," the 44-year-old Hammon said. The Aces split up the team's general manager duties with Laimbeer, Hammon and a few others handling it for now according to Las Vegas spokesman. The Aces finished with the second-best record in the

WNBA last season at 24-8 before falling to the Phoenix Mercury in the semifinals. The franchise, looking for its first WNBA title, has a solid core led by former MVP A'ja Wilson.

"We have some really good pieces in place, so it's about adding new pieces that will fit my style of play," Hammon said. "We'll probably shoot a few more 3s to be honest, run up and down a bit more. The type of player I really want is a competitive one."

Hammon played in the WNBA from 1999-2014. The six-time All-Star began her career with the New York Liberty, who also interviewed her for their coaching vacancy earlier this month. She finished with the San Antonio Stars, who later became the Aces.

Las Vegas retired her jersey this season and she spent a little bit of time with the team, including working with Kelsey Plum.

"We're very excited to have Becky return to the Aces' franchise as our head coach," team president Nikki Fargas said. "Her success in the sport of basketball as both a player and a coach is unparalleled, and fueled by a tenacious desire to be the best she can possibly be. We have one of the most talented rosters in the WNBA, and Becky is the absolute best person to lead this team." □

Cameron Maybin retires after 15 major league seasons

By **The Associated Press**

Outfielder Cameron Maybin is retiring after 15 major league seasons.

"Although my journey as a professional baseball player ends here with the announcement of my retirement, my work in this game is just getting started," Maybin wrote in a statement on Twitter on Monday. "I'm excited for what lies ahead, including my work with the Players Alliance in our effort to provide access and opportunity for the next generation of Black ballplayers."

The 34-year-old had one hit in 28 at-bats from May 19-29 last season for the New York Mets. He was assigned to Triple-A Syracuse on June 3 and hit .182 with no homers and five RBIs in 44 at-bats for the Mets' top farm team. Detroit selected him with the 10th overall pick in the 2005 amateur draft. Maybin had a .254 career batting average with 72 homers and 354 RBIs for the Tigers (2007, 2016, 2020), Florida/Miami (2008-10, 2018), San Diego (2011-14), Atlanta (2015), the Los An-

geles Angels (2017), Houston (2017), Seattle (2018), the New York Yankees (2019), the Chicago Cubs (2020) and the Mets. He won a World Series title with the 2017 Astros, when he singled off the Los Angeles Dodgers' Brandon McCarthy leading off the 11th inning of Game 2, stole second and scored on George Springer's tiebreaking, two-run home run in a 7-6 win. Maybin hit his only postseason home run for the Yankees in the 2019 AL Division Series off Minnesota's Sergio Romo. □



New York Mets' Cameron Maybin advances to first base on a dropped third strike in the ninth inning of a baseball game against the Atlanta Braves, May 19, 2021, in Atlanta.

Associated Press

New year starts with a familiar question about Woods

By **DOUG FERGUSON**

AP Golf Writer

KAPALUA, Hawaii (AP) —

The largest winners-only field ever assembled at Kapalua can make it seem as though getting to paradise isn't as difficult as it used to be.

Try telling that to Dustin Johnson, who will not be starting a new year on Maui for only the second time since he joined the PGA Tour in 2008. The locals have grown accustomed to Johnson sauntering into the Honolua Store at dawn to order his egg whites and brown rice.

Winning is hard, even for the best.

Equally difficult is predicting how a new year will unfold. Strange as it would have seemed a year ago that Johnson would not be part of the 39-man field at the Sentry Tournament of Champions, consider who is here. Phil Mickelson, who 14 times over the last two decades turned down his invitation to the winners-only event, at age 51 found 8 million reasons to play.

By winning the Player Impact Program and its \$8 million bonus, Lefty was required to add a new tournament to his schedule. So he decided to play golf on Maui.

Where will it lead? Here are five topics to ponder for the new year, which starts with a question that seems to repeat itself each year: What next for Tiger Woods?

TIGER SIGHTING

The Daily Mail published photos of Woods this week at Los Angeles International



Tiger Woods fist bumps his son Charlie Woods on the 16th green during the second round of the PNC Championship golf tournament, Sunday, Dec. 19, 2021, in Orlando, Fla.

Associated Press

Airport wearing a hoodie that most appropriately read, "Straight Outta Ice Bath."

The road to recovery from multiple injuries to his right leg in a Feb. 23 car crash remains long. All it took was three days playing with his son in the PNC Championship, where they finished second, to get the golf world buzzing about his next comeback.

The only certainty is that Woods won't be playing a full schedule. The swing hasn't left him. But he was allowed to ride in a cart at the PNC Championship, and the format was a scramble. That's a long way from anything remotely resembling serious competition.

Bank on him being at The Players Championship, at least for his induction into the World Golf Hall of Fame. It's also a safe bet he'll be at Augusta National for the Masters Club dinner for champions. As for playing? That depends on his ability to navigate the toughest

walk on tour.

The only big hill to climb at St. Andrews is the Swilcan bridge, and given his love for links, an appearance at the 150th British Open is a popular pick.

In the meantime, he only needs to post an occasional video to keep everyone guessing.

THE SAUDI LEAGUE

Talk of a rival league backed by Saudi Arabia's sovereign wealth fund is starting to sound like a game of chicken. Who will be the first to sign up?

It has been more than two months since Greg Norman hand-picked media outlets to cover the creation of his LIV Golf Investments and the \$200 million investment in the Asian Tour, which he said was "only the beginning" and promised "additive new opportunities."

Since then, the Shark has filled his C-Suite but has yet to name any players willing to join a new league. The PGA Tour is taking it seriously enough to push prize money closer to \$500

million and draw up plans to compensate its biggest stars.

One pivotal date could be the first week in February, when more than two dozen PGA Tour players have signed up to take big appearance money to play in the Saudi International.

GRAND SLAM

Mickelson proved age is just a number when it comes to winning a major. His victory in the PGA Championship at 50 made him the oldest major champion in history and created hope that a U.S. Open — the missing piece of the career Grand Slam — is still in play.

He isn't alone in his pursuit, leading to another question: Is the next member of golf's most elite club likely to be Rory McIlroy or Jordan Spieth?

McIlroy has gone to Augusta National the last seven years with a shot at getting the career Grand Slam with only a serious chance at it in 2018, when he played in the final group with Patrick Reed and shot 74.

Spieth captured the third leg in 2017 and now needs only the PGA Championship. His game appears to be back in order after winning the Texas Open. Unlike the Masters, the PGA Championship moves around and some venues are more suitable than others. Southern Hills in Tulsa, Oklahoma, would seem to provide one of the better opportunities for Spieth.

COLLIN'S CLIMB

Collin Morikawa lost one opportunity to reach No. 1 in the world when he gave up a five-shot lead in the final round of the Hero World Challenge in the Bahamas. He gets another shot at Kapalua, though Jon Rahm will have a say in defending his top spot.

But this is about more than the No. 1 ranking, which comes and goes.

Morikawa has played two full seasons on the PGA Tour and already has two majors, and his profile gets stronger by the month. To win another major this year would put him in elite territory. Dating to 1960, only six players have won majors in three successive years — Arnold Palmer, Jack Nicklaus, Tom Watson, Tiger Woods, Phil Mickelson and Brooks Koepka.

PRESIDENTS CUP

Who wins the Presidents Cup at Quail Hollow is not nearly as interesting as who makes — or who doesn't make — the U.S. team.

More than just giving Europe its worst beating in the Ryder Cup, the Americans had a core of a team that was young and cocky and cohesive. How many of them will make it to Quail Hollow in September?

Remember, the U.S. team that won the Ryder Cup at Hazeltine by a 17-11 margin had only seven players who made it to the Presidents Cup the following year.

Among those left off this year were Sam Burns, who now is No. 10 in the world. Matthew Wolff was finding his joy and his form by the end of the year. Big-hitting Jason Kokrak won twice last year. Something — or someone — will have to give. □

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